

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 13193 190946Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 SSM-03 AID-05 IO-13
/111 W

-----035935 200506Z /15

R 181556Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9312
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PEPR EG MASS
SUBJECT: GAMASY STATEMENT ON AIRCRAFT DEAL

SUMMARY: GAMASY STATEMENT ON F-5 PACKAGE STRIKES
BALANCED POSE BETWEEN "POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE" OF DEAL
AND ULTIMATE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF NEW RELATIONSHIP
WITH U.S. WHILE NOTING THAT F-5'S WILL ADVANCE EGYPT'S
DIVERSIFICATION PROGRAM, GAMASY STRESSED THAT AIR FORCE
WILL CONTINUE TO RELY ON FRENCH MIRAGES AND TO USE
SOVIET-SUPPLIED MIG'S. GAMASY STATEMENT APPEARS TO BE
ATTEMPT TO PUT F-5'S IN REALISTIC PERSPECTIVE AND TO
REASSURE SOVIET TRAINED EGYPTIAN MILITARY OFFICIALS
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THAT NASCENT ARMS RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S. WILL NOT
PREJUDICE THEIR POSITION WITHIN EGYPTIAN MILITARY. END
SUMMARY.

1. STATEMENT BY MINWAR GAMASY MAY 17 ON EGYPTIAN
ACQUISITION OF F-5 AIRCRAFT EXTENSIVELY
COVERED IN MAY 18 MEDIA, RECEIVING BANNER HEADLINE IN

AKHBAR. GAMASY, IN ADDRESS TO GRADUATING AIR CADETS AFTER TRAINING ON MIG-21'S UNDERLINED "HIGH POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE" OF AIRCRAFT DEAL AND PREDICTED THAT F-5'S WILL RAISE EGYPT'S OVERALL AIR STRENGTH. GAMASY NOTED THAT, DESPITE ACQUISITION OF 50 F-5 AIRCRAFT, EGYPT'S STRATEGY WILL REMAIN BASED "PRIMARILY ON RELIANCE UPON FRENCH-MADE MIRAGE." NOR DOES F-5 DEAL MEAN, ACCORDING TO GAMASY, THAT EGYPT WOULD SOON DISCARD SOVIET-MADE MIG-17 AND 21, BUT WOULD USE THEM UNTIL THEY BECOME INOPERABLE. "EGYPT ENTERED OCTOBER WAR WITH SOVIET AIRCRAFT, SOVIET AIRCRAFT WORK WELL AND CAN STILL BE USED." ACQUISITION OF AMERICAN F-5'S REPRESENTS SUCCESS OF GOE POLICY OF DIVERSIFYING ARMAMENT SOURCES, BUT THIS POLICY HAD BEEN ADOPTED LONG BEFORE AGREEMENT ON F-5'S. GAMASY ADMITTED SOVIET ARMS BAN HAD AFFECTED EGYPTIAN AIR FORCE, DESPITE ACQUISITION OF MIRAGES. F-5'S WILL SOON "COMPLETE AIR FORCE PICTURE", ALLOWING AIR FORCE TO REMAIN STRONG AND BATTLE READY. GAMASY PRAISED EGYPTIAN AIR FORCE PERSONNEL AND NOTED THAT AIR FORCE HAS BEEN ABLE TO ABSORB MIRAGES IN "RECORD TIME OF THREE YEARS.

2. COMMENT: DESPITE GAMASY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF F-5'S, HIS ADDRESS TO GRADUATING CADETS APPEARS PRIMARILY EFFORT TO PUT F-5 DEAL INTO MILITARY PERSPECTIVE FOR POSSIBLY SKEPTICAL ARMED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FORCES. AFTER RECENT PUBLICITY BELITTling F-5 IN COMPARISON TO F-15'S AND SADAT'S TERMING F-5 "TENTH RATE AIRCRAFT", IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT FOR GAMASY TO ENTHUSE OVER F-5 PACKAGE WITHOUT QUALIFICATIONS. FACT THAT GAMASY'S REMARKS MADE TO GRADUATING CADETS AT MIG-21 BASE MAY NOT BE COINCIDENCE. HE MAY HAVE WISHED TO REASSURE MILITARY PERSONNEL TRAINED IN SOVIET UNION OR ON SOVIET EQUIPMENT THAT NASCENT MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. WILL NOT PREJUDICE THEIR STANDING. MATTHEWS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, AIR DEFENSE, SPEECHES, MILITARY SALES, MILITARY PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CAIRO13193
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780212-0618
Format: TEL
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780546/aaaabmua.tel
Line Count: 104
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7cd3309b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2655248
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GAMASY STATEMENT ON AIRCRAFT DEAL SUMMARY: GAMASY STATEMENT ON F-5 PACKAGE STRIKES BALANCED POSE BETWEEN \"POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE\" OF
TAGS: PEPR, MASS, SOPN, EG, (AL-GAMASY, MUHAMMAD ABD AL-GHANI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7cd3309b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014